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respective ones of the pair of slanted side walls and the both groove walls being oriented parallel to each other as viewed in cross-section.

B2
3. (Twice Amended) A pneumatic tire provided with a plurality of main grooves extended in a tire circumferential direction on a tread surface, wherein, with regard to a main groove having a groove width narrowed during inflation among said plurality of main grooves, both groove walls are inclined from the tread surface so as to define an acute angle between respective ones of the groove walls and the tread surface so that the groove width of the main groove becomes wider toward a groove bottom of the main groove, and a protrusion dividing a groove space of the main groove in a tire width direction is provided at the groove bottom, the protrusion having a pair of side walls and respective ones of the pair of side walls and the both groove walls being oriented parallel to each other as viewed in cross-section, wherein said protrusion is made equal to or lower than said tread surface, a height difference between said protrusion and said tread surface is set in a range from 0 to 2 mm and a ratio of the height of said protrusion to a groove depth of the main groove is set at 0.8 or higher.

4. (Amended) The pneumatic tire according to any one of claims 1 and 2, wherein said protrusion is divided in the tire width direction by a slit formed into the flat top surface towards the groove bottom and extending circumferentially thereabout to form a first divided protrusion section and a second divided protrusion section in facial contact with the first divided protrusion section at the slit.

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3 and 4 are amended.

Claims 1 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of Japan 9-150609. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The admitted prior art shows a pneumatic tire having ribbed treads with circumferential grooves having widths that narrow during inflation. The admitted prior